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**Southern College's
Journal of
Poetry and Prose**

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As seasons change, so do our
lives. The memories that shape us
today are our legacy to the world of
tomorrow.

Jason D. Stirewalt
Legacy Editor

Acknowledgements

Editor: Jason D. Stirewalt
Layout: Bryan N. Bennett
Sponsor: Helen Pyke

Judging
Committee: Dr. Arlie E. Herron, UTC
Dr. Ruth Kantzer, Bryan College
Marisol Perales, Writer's Club President
Dr. David Smith, Southern College

Student
Photographers: Crystal Candy
David George
Scott Guptill
Eve Parker
Wayne Stickney

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—Wayne Stickney

The Lesson of the Butterfly

I saw a yellow butterfly alight upon a flower,
And in my childish eagerness, forgot my fingers' power.
I only meant to fondle it! But here the memory stings—
In my love for something lovely, may I never crush its wings.

I watched a joyful friendship as it blossomed day by day,
And clutched it closer to my heart for fear it wouldn't stay.
But still a yellow butterfly this phrase to memory brings:
In my love for something lovely, may I never crush its wings.

I saw two hearts grow closer, and two minds begin to dream
Of far-off possibilities for somewhere way downstream.
But now my memory echoes as I loosen my heart strings—
In my love for something lovely, may I never crush its wings.

—Sharon Wright

A Time of Morbidity

A letter from home;
Hospital bills;
Long distance phone calls made often
and then...
Plane fare home.

Black dresses and dark suits enter the car.
Rain falls

a

l

l

silently, unceasingly.

Thoughts, questions, and memories flood your mind while
Staring blankly at windshield wipers keeping time
back and forth; back and forth.

A room is dimly lit;
Strong scented flowers overwhelm you as you enter the door.
People come and go throughout the evening—
Faces of those you know and
those you don't.

Tears well up behind unseeing, frozen eyes;
A large lump tightens and chokes you as you try to swallow.
And then it's over.

Home alone—
Quiet darkness envelopes you in a tender caress.
The ice is broken; the river begins to flow
slowly
in muffled sobs.

—Jan Dunn



—David George

Thoughts

Fireworks explode.

Bombs erupt.

Missiles collide.

Dynamite ignites.

Atoms split.

Reactors react.

Mines detonate.

My mind reacts.

I think.

—Jason D. Stirewalt

Your Eyes

Melted chocolate
swirled round and round
like the eye of a tornado
drawing me in
like a kaleidoscope
mesmerizing my soul.
Deep dark rich chocolate
touched by the sun,
tempting my love-starved
soul to eat and be filled.
Pools of liquid chocolate,
I want to jump in and drown.

—Christina Hogan



—Crystal Candy

Crawdad Boy

Crawdad chimneys are scattered through my yard.
Big ones, small ones. Big ones are the best.
Bobby takes a bucket everywhere we go.
Down in the mud and the weeds,
the rocks and the leaves
following the creek that runs by the road.
Big ones, small ones. Big ones are the best.

Finding 'em is easy, catching 'em is hard.
Big ones, small ones. Big ones are the best.
I wear my boots all day, every day,
except to church and maybe school
(it ain't against the rules).
There's a Grandaddy crawdad under my driveway.
One day we'll catch him, I bet.
Tear off his claws 'cause they grow back anyway.
Big ones, small ones. Big ones are the best.

—Noah McCall

Tell me Yes
Tell me No
But don't paralyze me with a maybe
Cut me Off
Reel me In
But don't leave me on your string
Give me All
Give me Nothing
But don't wet my lips and leave me thirsty
Ask me In
Shut the Door
But don't lock me up in your closet

—Marisol Perales

She kissed me.
I kissed her.
We looked into each other's eyes.
It was...
...
What if I should say
 that I saw into her soul just then?
Would that make the moment
 More romantic, more real, more spiritual somehow
 Than it was?
And if I had returned her volley of queries
 Over the wall of Me,
 Over the wall of She,
 Through the woods of words
 And personal reactions and personal objections and personal confessions
With the trophy: "Because I love you"
Would that have been some great achievement?
If so, for whom?
It would be her trophy, that she had won, however
 Foolishly.
But it would be I who might look into those wonderful, deep, beautiful,
 Simply unreadable, sadly rather ordinary eyes
And find some sought after message.

She kissed me.
I kissed her.

—Bryan Roberts



—Eve Parker

Summer Memories

Lazy summer days,
Wearing cut-off jeans and old t-shirts,
Walking barefoot through endless cotton fields,
Like dancing on clouds.
Sitting on the white porch swing,
Guzzling iced tea by the gallon,
Only the country music station breaking the stillness.
Stomachs growling as the aroma of
Black-eyed peas, cornbread, and pecan pie drift by.
Under the pines we lie on our backs in the intense
Georgia heat and
Dream of being nowhere else.

—Christina Hogan

A C C E L E R A T I O N

Gently sitting down,
 Feel your body relax,
 Soft, cushy leather enfolds you

 Fire burning at your back;
roaring lion drawing closer.

Thumbs up!
 thrust throttle forward,
 cable drops

 Black rubber streaks
Scorching wheels

 Over
 the
 water

Higher!

Higher

Higher,

Going Higher,

Forced b into the seat

a

c

k

Going faster,

Faster,

FASTER

A C C E L E R A T I O N

—Nathan Tidwell

April 19, 1995*

I can hear the voices crying,
the outrage of the country.
The innocence and normalcy
ended before the five-o'clock bell
by someone with no right
to push the clock ahead.
The flags have lost their glory,
their redness flowing down the poles.
From half their height,
they demonstrate our mourning.

—Eve Parker

*April 19, 1995 commemorates the date
of the Oklahoma City bombing.

—Scott Gupill



Of Rain

But sometimes we don't.
Sometimes we lie together in a quiet place
surrounded by grass and the warm wet taste
of rain—
of rain
falling from the summer stars
happy to have company like ours.

And every night they open their eyes
they'll see us there and realize
a thousand things about us.
But they can live without us.

And sometimes we do.
Sometimes we lie together where tall grass waves,
and the entire sky misbehaves
like God is stirring a potion—
above while we lie in this ocean
of rain.

—Cherie Priest

Packages

Her words cut the paper
That wrapped itself around
Our neat little package
Painted with dreams and
Star-studded fantasies.

Her words tugged at the heart
She had tied with beautiful
String and silver ribbon
So bright that all could
See its lustrery shine.

Her words broke through
The package and string
And ribbon and stars and
Dreams of what
One day would surely be.

"I Want Out," she said.

—Jason D. Stirewalt

Time

Time's incessant ticking
Beats with fury in my head—
Like hammer pounding,
Slowly knocking
Every second dead.

This emperor has no remorse
While killing hour by hour.
His holocaust
Knows no exhaust—
In speed or deadly power.

—Jim Lounsbury



—Wayne Stickney

Sunrise over Sanctuary Lake

Perhaps there is no time or place so serene as the morning over Sanctuary Lake. It is that moment just before the break of dawn when everything seems changed, as if by some great wizard's wand, into a mystical fairy land.

It is silent. Absolute silence overcomes everything until it is the only sound. All day and night storms have been raging, crashing thunder and beating waves have sent chills through even the strongest hearts. Trees have been tossed and broken as the tempest beats them with its unrelenting fury.

But at dawn, all is quiet. There is just enough light to hint of the glorious day to come. Mists rise from the lake's glassy surface, like spirits hovering over a mirror, endlessly reflected in their symphonic dance as they rise, gracefully disappearing into the awakening sky.

There is not yet enough light to reveal the living colors of day, and all is enshrouded in an enchanting mist, a color so absent from all other times and places it is impossible to describe.

Even as the day begins to break, the echoes and the whispers of spirits and fairies mingle with the wings of retreating angels as they silently dissolve from this enchanted moment. Yet all is still. There is no hint of a breeze, no rustle of the grass. It is as if all nature were silent, reverently entranced in this timeless moment.

The Creator is there. He can be almost seen, always just out of sight, walking in the fairy mists, now leaning down to whisper to a lily, now gently caressing a towering pine. Around him is an air of unspeakable calm, and all nature is still in his presence.

The sun is just about to break over the horizon. Brilliant streams of light radiate from its glimmering surface, illuminating every leaf, every blade of grass, and striking every dewdrop into shimmering, unspeakable glory.

The silent mist-fairies now leap toward the sun, gloriously enshrouded in living red, hurrying to the skies to mingle with the clouds, waiting for another morning to dance on the flawless surface of the lake.

The first bird begins to sing as the sun makes its radiant appearance. All nature comes to a worshipful still as for a moment too small to calculate, yet so timeless it lives on forever, the Creator is visible. He turns his face to the sun, then looks back and smiles at each leaf, every blade of grass, every small white lily. It is a moment detached from earth, a split second spent in heaven.

And then he is gone. Birds strike up a chorus of praise, and an elk sends up his majestic call of love to his Creator. A trout, gloriously arrayed with all colors of the spectrum, leaps through the placid waters to glimmer in the sunlight before splashing down to awake the sea to another day. The sun is full in the sky, inviting all to awake and enjoy every beauty the Creator has given them.

I am left awestruck, unable to move. I can do nothing in the face of such unspeakable glory, such sheer delight, such a display of complete devotion to the Creator. I bow my head and worship, thanking the creator for this moment at sanctuary lake when I saw Him, face to face.

—Katie Martin



—Wayne Stickney

LISA

"Is this the idiot of the house?" I ask with a smirk.

"Yes, it is," my sister, Lisa, replies over the phone. "Is this the other idiot of the house?"

Ever since we could talk, it's been a tradition between us to insult each other.

"So whaddya want?" she asks.

"Umm...is mom there?"

"She's outside. You don't want to talk to me?"

"Well...I *guess* I could." Actually, it surprises me that she wants to talk to me. Not that we aren't friends. We are. But some rule somewhere says sisters aren't supposed to act like they actually miss each other. I know I read it somewhere.

Lisa, age 17 going on 18, is almost three years younger than me. Being the only two siblings in our family, we were each other's best friend. OK, maybe not for the first 15 years or so.

I enjoyed being the big sister, bossing her around, making her my slave. I enjoyed tormenting her by packing my suitcase and pretending I was running away. She would run out the door after me crying "Tina, don't go! Don't go!"

Finally one day she had had enough. I told her to do something. She told me "No." And that was the end of that.

Through our childhoods we did everything together: ice-skating lessons, swimming lessons, piano lessons, playing house, riding bikes, digging for buried treasure. We laughed and cried together, schemed and connived together, dreamed and planned together. We also landed a few hard blows on each other, leaving blackish-bluish-purplish marks of our anger. Sometimes she made me so mad I'd scream and throw things at her. Usually she just stood there quietly, her big eyes staring at me until I was done. If anybody laid a finger on her, I'd kill them.

We drifted apart in high school. I was a senior when she was a lowly freshman. I couldn't associate with freshmen. She had her group of friends, I had mine.

Then I left for college. We never talked on the phone once in the next two years. I'd see her on vacation, but that was it.

I realized one day that I actually missed the little brat. The little brat is a senior in high school now. Of course, I couldn't admit I missed her. I couldn't admit I missed watching movies with her, laughing till the tears blurred our vision, I couldn't admit I missed all our secret jokes, the way we say the same thing at the same time, I couldn't admit I missed making her laugh out loud in church. Big sisters don't need little sisters. And of course, she would never admit she missed me when I went away to college. So we both never said anything.

Now, three years later, she wants to talk to me on the phone. So we talk. About everything. About how stupid guys are, about how boring school is, about the latest Jim Carey movie, about all the animals at home, about the coolest new songs on the radio.

I get a card in the mail from her the next week. "Sometimes all you need is a big smile to get you through the day," it reads. I open it up to see Snoopy flashing a cheesy grin at me. "Love, Lisa," is all she wrote.

That's all I needed to know.

—Christina Hogan



—Scott Gupill

The Insanity Machine

There seems to be a popular misconception going around that computers are inanimate objects controlled by programs (which are nothing more than long lines of numbers) to perform various tasks. Those people who hold this view are badly mistaken. All computers belong to one of several vast organizations whose sole purpose is to drive the human race insane. The plot can be diverted, however, if people will only learn to recognize characteristics from the following types of computers.

Type 1: The hide-and-seek computer

This computer is the one that is constantly moving your files, programs, directories, and icons, without your knowledge or approval. It scrambles your data files, and you can forget about ever seeing your command files again. Your friendly PC repairman will tell you that your `autoexec.bat` file is malfunctioning, or some other incomprehensible thing, but all intelligent beings know that the PC repairman is in league with the computer and they are just playing games with your mind. I would suggest unplugging it and putting it on the floor. I hear they make great doorstops.

Type 2: The obstinate computer

This is the one that flatly ignores you when you want it to do something. You type on the keyboard, and the screen remains blank. You move the mouse, and the little pointer stays in the same place. Sometimes there are words on the screen that say something like "Syntax error. System halted." As if anyone knew what that meant. The computer is mocking you. Sometimes it says, "You have been logged out of the network. You will not be given the opportunity to save." You do know what that means: It means that the paper you just spent three hours doing is gone. And computers were supposed to make our lives easier.

Type 3: The over-friendly computer

This is the most dangerous type of all when it comes to pushing the human race over the brink of insanity. This is the computer that comes all prepackaged and setup, with everything you ever need neatly placed on a button bar in a warm fuzzy graphics environment. You trip happily along, never knowing or caring what the computer is doing, because it always responds to your beck and call, conforming to your slightest whim. Then one day you try to do something as simple as print, and suddenly you are dumped out to a hard, cold DOS prompt with a message that says something like "unable to read device on LPT1, please run set-up or DIOGS now." At this point the only thing you can possibly do is drop the computer on your neighbor's dog (you know, the one that barks all night) and hope that there was enough weight in the CPU to kill the miserable mutt.

Type 4: The new model, showroom computer

This is the one that the salesman at PC World wants you to buy. Set up on the show floor in the computer store, it has intriguing, moving pictures on the screen and responds perfectly and effortlessly to the salesman's every touch. He rattles on about the computer's 400 MB hard drive, 8 MB of extendable and expandable memory, its CD-ROM drive, external peripherals, and a host of other things that you don't even want to understand.

The screen display amazes you, however, and you admire the way that full-color newsletters miraculously appear at the click of a mouse. You take it home and excitedly plug it in only to discover a black screen that says C:> with a little blinking light after it, as if you were supposed to type something. In desperation, you refer to the stack of computer manuals that were in the bottom of the box (the computer salesman didn't mention them) only to discover that not only are they over 500 pages long, they are also incomprehensible. At this point, all you can do is put a cover on

your new computer and use it for a coffee table, because that, my friend, is the only way you will escape the asylum.

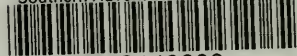
Fellow humans, be aware of the plot against us; guard yourself and your loved ones from these attacks on our mentality. If we band together, we can overthrow this new computer empire, and return to the days of pen and ink, when everything still made sense.

—Katie Martin



—Wayne Stickney

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